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From the NIFA Communications Office

NIFA in the News – Week of October 8, 2012

Curious as to what happens to all the news releases you see in the NIFA newsroom? Here's the weekly summary of NIFA's mentions in the news media for the week of October 8, 2012.

In the News

MSU to lead $1.6 million grant on crop pollination (Pork Magazine 10/8). USDA has awarded Michigan State University $1.6 million to lead a national crop pollination research and Extension project. The five-year program will focus on improving pollination and attracting bees to specialty farms and crops. It is part of the USDA's $101 million initiative to support the nation's specialty crop producers. Rufus Isaacs, a professor in the Department of Entomology and AgBioResearch scientist, and his team will look at specialty crop pollination and develop region- and crop-specific Integrated Crop Pollination management approaches to diversify pollination sources and maintain consistent crop yields. These may include honey bees, wild bees and alternative managed bees such as bumble bees. They will also examine adding habitat for bees to provide food for the bees when crops are not in bloom. Inclusion of economics and social science components will help make the results more relevant to real-world farming situations. Link

Potato researchers and producers to meet at annual conference (Southwest Farm Press 10/9). Researchers and producers will conveneto outline where the potato industry is in the battle against an expensive disease threatening the industry at the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)Zebra Chip Annual Reporting Session. The conference is the annual meeting of a U.S. Department of Agriculture-National Institute of Food and Agriculture-sponsored Specialty Crop Research Initiative led by Dr. Charlie Rush, Texas A&M AgriLife Research plant pathologist in Amarillo. Link

University of Minnesota spearheads project for more sustainable lawns (The Line Media 10/10). Advocates of sustainability have often demonized lawn care for squandering water, adding fertilizers and herbicides to the environment, and increasing our carbon footprint through gas-powered mowing. But a new research project from the University of Minnesota could make both environmentalists and homeowners happier in the future. Funded by a $2.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the 5-year project is part of a national research effort aimed at improving specialty crops. Researchers will be investigating ways to develop turf grasses that require less water and mowing, and that stay green without extensive use of pesticides and fertilizers. Link

USDA scientists met to discuss 4R implementation (Ag Professional 10/10). On Sept. 25, the USDA held a Partnership Meeting to discuss nitrogen management through utilization of the 4Rs. The USDA Partnership Meeting was a time for representatives from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to gather and discuss pertinent issues. At this meeting, they met to discuss technologies and approaches for nitrogen management through utilization of 4R Nutrient Stewardship. Link

Long-term study shows many benefits of longer rotations (KTIC 10/12). Analysis of data collected since 2003 at Iowa State University research plots comparing two-year corn-soybean rotations with longer-term rotations reveals many advantages, including higher yields, lower energy use and effective weed and pest management with far fewer chemicals, while providing comparable economic returns. The Leopold Center provided a competitive grant to set up the research plots in 2003 and has continued to support this project. Additional support comes from the ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, with funding leveraged from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Research Initiative, Iowa Soybean Association and the Organic Center. Link

Cornell's International Ag Program Earns First USDA Global Award (WBNG 10/12). International Programs in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University has been recognized for its exceptional efforts to strengthen U.S. and global agriculture. On Thursday, the program received the first-ever Program Improvement through Global Engagement Partnership award from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The award recognizes Cornell's commitment to global engagement with students, farmers, professionals and governments, for the benefit of agriculture in the U.S. and abroad. Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA director, said Cornell's application clearly demonstrated outcomes, critical and unique impacts, and programs that have long-term, sustained benefits. Link

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